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The President's Daily Brief

25X1

20 November 1972

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Chancellor Brandt led his coalition to a strong victory in West Germany's parliamentary elections. *(Page 1)*

In Argentina, the government is attempting to maintain its political advantage over Peron. *(Page 2)*

The conference of Arab foreign ministers accomplished nothing to alleviate the disarray among Arab states. *(Page 3)*

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WEST GERMANY

Chancellor Brandt led his coalition to a strong victory in yesterday's parliamentary elections, largely on the basis of his Ostpolitik. According to official results, Brandt's Social Democrats won 45.9 percent of the vote and 230 seats in parliament. For the first time in the history of the Federal Republic, the Social Democrats are the strongest single party in the lower house, and thus will select the president of the Bundestag as well as chairmen of committees. They will also have a majority membership on committees, an advantage not enjoyed in the past. Brandt's coalition partners, the Free Democrats, won 8.4 percent of the vote and 42 seats.

The Christian Democrats will continue to control the upper house, where they will be able to delay legislation. However, the Christian Democrats and their Bavarian allies, the Christian Socialist Union, gained only 44.8 percent of the vote and 224 seats, their worst showing since 1949.

Brandt's first major move will be to bring the recently initialed treaty with East Germany into effect. In a victory speech yesterday, the Chancellor repeated a campaign pledge to visit East Berlin before Christmas to sign the accord. Ratification of the treaty and application for membership in the United Nations should come shortly after that. For their part, the East Germans quickly indicated their pleasure about the results of the election and its favorable impact on the treaty.

Several governments, particularly the Nordic states, are likely to recognize East Germany in the immediate future. Finland, long in the forefront of this movement, announced yesterday that it has decided in principle to recognize both Germanies.

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ARGENTINA

Some elements of the government and the armed forces are concerned that President Lanusse, in yielding to Peron's demand for freedom of action, has allowed the former dictator to gain the upper hand. [redacted] 25X1

Moreover, the decision to permit Peron to address a mass rally reflects Lanusse's belief that Peron, at 77, cannot live up to the myth that has developed during his 17 years in exile.

Lanusse is also taking steps to block Peron's effort to put together a political coalition. [redacted] 25X1

Peron, meanwhile, has been cautiously seeking to muster strength for his coming public appearances and political talks. The crowds surrounding his mansion in a Buenos Aires suburb attest to his continuing popularity, but unless he ends his seclusion soon government charges that he is avoiding the public will begin to have a telling effect. He may move slowly with political negotiations, however, in the hope that the military's doubts about Lanusse's handling of the affair will grow and undercut the government's position.

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NOTES

Arab States: The Arab foreign ministers' conference in Kuwait, which ended Saturday, did nothing to alleviate the disarray among Arab states. The participants were not able to agree even on a joint communiqué, much less make any progress on such issues as Jordan's long-standing quarrel with the fedayeen. The Jordanians refused to go along with the terrorists' demand that they be allowed to operate everywhere, including Jordan. Efforts by some ministers to promote an Arab summit meeting also apparently got nowhere.

Jordan: [redacted] 25X1
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Honduras: [redacted] 25X1
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